
Section 6: Phase 2 MI-Access Update

Phase 2 MI-Access Timeline 1

PHASE 2 MI-ACCESS UPDATE

As mentioned in earlier sections of the training packet, in 2002 only two alternate assessments were available to students with disabilities—MI-Access Participation and MI-Access Supported Independence. These two assessments—which are designed primarily for students who have, or function as if they have, severe or moderate cognitive impairment—comprise what is commonly referred to as Phase 1 MI-Access.

*Recognizing that there are many students with disabilities for whom these two assessments, along with the MEAP, are inappropriate, Michigan is currently developing additional alternate assessments referred to as **Phase 2 MI-Access**.*

Following is a timeline showing many of the activities that have already taken place in the development of Phase 2 assessments, as well as what remains to be done before Phase 2 MI-Access is administered statewide.

Phase 2 MI-Access Timeline

March 2002: Beck Evaluation and Testing Associates (BETA), the MI-Access operational contractor, assists the MDE in developing Phase 2 MI-Access assessments.

April 2002: A Phase 2 Assessment Plan Writing Team (APWT) is convened and charged with developing a proposed plan that includes information on (1) who is to be assessed, (2) what is to be assessed, (3) the format(s) of the assessments, and (4) prototypical assessment items. The team consists of twenty-four knowledgeable, experienced stakeholders, including classroom teachers (general and special education), parents, and administrators from across the state, some of whom were members of the MI-Access Alternate Assessment Advisory Committee or participated in the Phase 1 MI-Access performance standard-setting process.

May 2002: The APWT describes the characteristics of the diverse population of learners likely to participate in Phase 2 MI-Access. The description includes students whose IEP Teams have determined it is inappropriate for them to participate in the MEAP, the MEAP with assessment accommodations, and Phase 1 MI-Access. Because there is such a wide range of students with disabilities who fit this category, they are referred to as the “Grand Canyon” students.

May 2002: The APWT identifies various characteristics of the “Grand Canyon” students in five categories—cognitive/physical ability, social/behavioral characteristics, knowledge and skills (reading, language arts, mathematics), instructional/assessment strategies, and expectations/adult life roles.

May 2002: The APWT continues to refine the description of the “Grand Canyon” students as it learns more and gains new insights into the broad and complex nature of this population of students. It also learns that, because of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Phase 2 assessments must include English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and eventually science.

The group determines that there are three functioning levels within the “Grand Canyon”:

1. A very small group of students who will participate in some part of the MEAP (with or without assessment accommodations) *and* the alternate assessment in either ELA or mathematics. (For example, a student might take the fourth-grade MEAP in mathematics and the fourth-grade Phase 2 alternate assessment in ELA.). This will be a fairly rare occurrence.
2. Another very small group of students who will participate *only* in the MI-Access alternate assessments in ELA and mathematics. Again, this will be a fairly rare occurrence.
3. A fairly large group of students who will take the Functional Independence alternate assessment, which is based upon the Model Content Standards in ELA, mathematics, and career and employability skills.

May 2002: The APWT begins “unpacking” Michigan’s content standards and benchmarks in two teams: one for mathematics and one for ELA. Each group (1) examines the standards and benchmarks in its subject area to “unpack” meaning; (2) generates examples of student work for standards and benchmarks (that is, what they look like in the classroom); (3) considers how benchmarks might be assessed in the classroom; and (4) extends the benchmarks, as needed.

June 2002: The APWT completes the “unpacking” process, determines which standards and benchmarks are most appropriately assessed at the state level, prioritizes assessment content, and begins shaping activities by constructing concrete examples.

June 2002: The APWT holds three twelve-hour sessions at which it

- continues to review relevant documents and resources, such as the *Michigan Curriculum Framework* Model Content Standards and Benchmarks,
- receives training on and uses the MI Climb CD-ROM,
- reviews the AUEN Functional Independence performance expectations,
- familiarizes itself with alternate assessment efforts in other states,
- reviews the Phase 1 MI-Access development process,
- reviews IDEA and NCLB mandates that affect alternate assessment, and
- hears presentations from group members on other potentially applicable assessment tools.

July 2002: The APWT begins focusing on the Functional Independence assessment, which will include ELA, mathematics, and career and employability skills. In addition, the APWT participates in a second retreat to continue the development of the proposed plan, including the assessment blueprint and prototype assessment items. The APWT begins to “unpack” the career and employability skills content standards and benchmarks and extend the benchmarks as needed.

August 2002: The APWT continues working on the career and employability skills component of the Functional Independence assessment, including the blueprint and prototype assessment items.

September 2002: The draft Phase 2 Assessment Plan is finalized by the APWT and presented to the MDE for review.

October/November 2002: The Proposed Phase 2 Assessment Plan is distributed for field review and comment.

November/December 2002: Functional Independence item writing begins in the content areas of ELA, mathematics, and career and employability skills.

January 2003: MI-Access committees review draft assessment items.

Spring 2003: Functional Independence “tryouts” take place in selected schools.

Spring 2004: The Functional Independence pilot begins and the MI-Access mathematics and ELA assessments are “tried out” in selected schools.

Winter 2005: The MI-Access Functional Independence assessment is administered for the first time statewide.

Spring 2005: Pilots commence for the MI-Access mathematics and ELA assessments.

Winter 2006: The MI-Access mathematics and ELA assessments are administered for the first time statewide.